

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A transaction card system includes a transaction card with a display tag for displaying short term information, the character display having optical states that are stable without power and viewable from one side of the display tag and an array of electrical contacts for electrically addressing the character display from the other side of the tag, a contact window through which the contacts are accessible, machine readable data on the card, and long term information printed on the transaction card; a transaction card writer having a reader for reading the machine readable data and having means for updating the short term information displayed on the transaction card; and a central computer connected to the transaction card writer having a data base and a central processor for receiving the information read by the magnetic card reader and generating display commands for the transaction card writer.